

Lake Perris

State Recreation Area



Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at (951) 940-5600. This publication is available in alternate formats by contacting:

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Discover the many states of California.™

Lake Perris State Recreation Area

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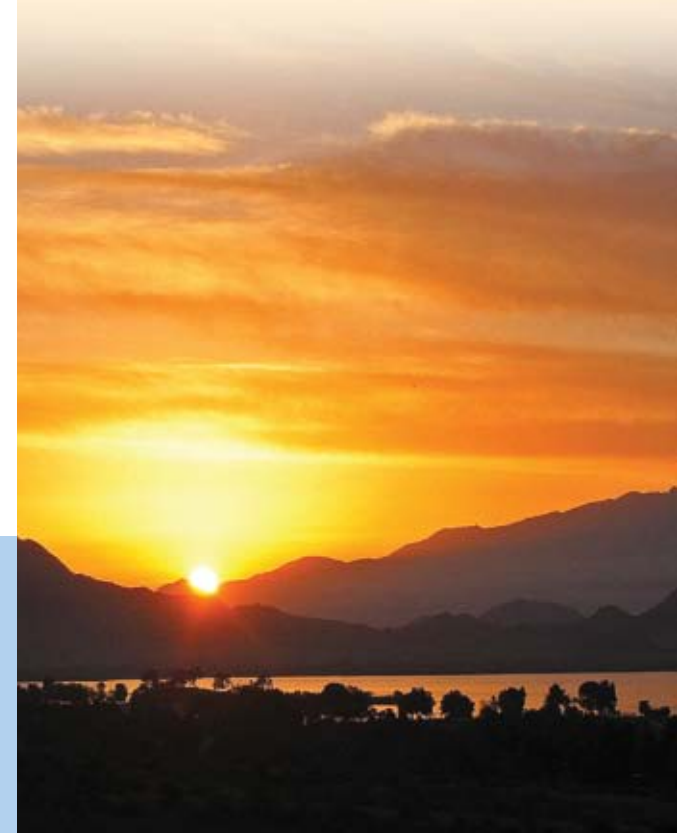
Perris, CA 92571

(951) 940-5600

www.parks.ca.gov/lakeperris

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*Lake Perris beckons
visitors with cool blue
waters, pristine beaches,
top-notch bass fishing,
wildlife watching and
miles of riding
and hiking trails.*



*H*idden among rock-studded hills,

Lake Perris State Recreation Area's 8,800 acres of broad valley are bounded on three sides by low ridges. The Bernasconi

Hills and the Russell, Apuma and Armada Mountains obscure the view of nearby cities. Inland, the San Bernardino, San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains, snow-capped in winter months, stand tall in the distance. The area boasts a rich variety of terrains, habitats and wildlife.

Lake Perris is located about 65 miles south of Los Angeles and 11 miles southeast of Riverside. The lake's clean white beaches, enticing blue waters, and rocky Alessandro Island bring nearly one million visitors from surrounding communities each year.

Activities in this popular park include fishing, water sports, bird watching, hiking, rock climbing, camping, horseback riding and visiting the Ya'i Heki' (pronounced *yahee ehkey*) Regional Indian Museum.

PARK HISTORY

Native People

For thousands of years, the native California groups who lived here enjoyed the area's abundant resources and mild climate. Food, water, shelter and clothing were plentiful. The native people hunted antelope, bighorn sheep, deer, rabbits,



Rare snowfall on Bernasconi Hills

birds and a variety of small mammals. Native seasonal houses were made of leaves and branches laid over tree limbs set upright, surrounded with low rock walls or other small structures.

Although distinct social units, the two largest groups—the Cahuilla and Luiseño—shared similar subsistence and settlement adaptations. The Luiseño ranged west to the coast while the Cahuilla extended east into the San Jacinto Mountains and Colorado Desert. Their territories overlapped in inland areas, including Perris Valley.

Artifacts found prior to dam construction indicate that both the Luiseño and Cahuilla traded with such nearby groups as the Serrano, Tongva (Gabrielino), Cupeño and Chemehuevi. These cultures are known for their rock art; some is still visible around the lake. Time has weathered away rock pictographs (paintings) and petroglyphs (engravings).

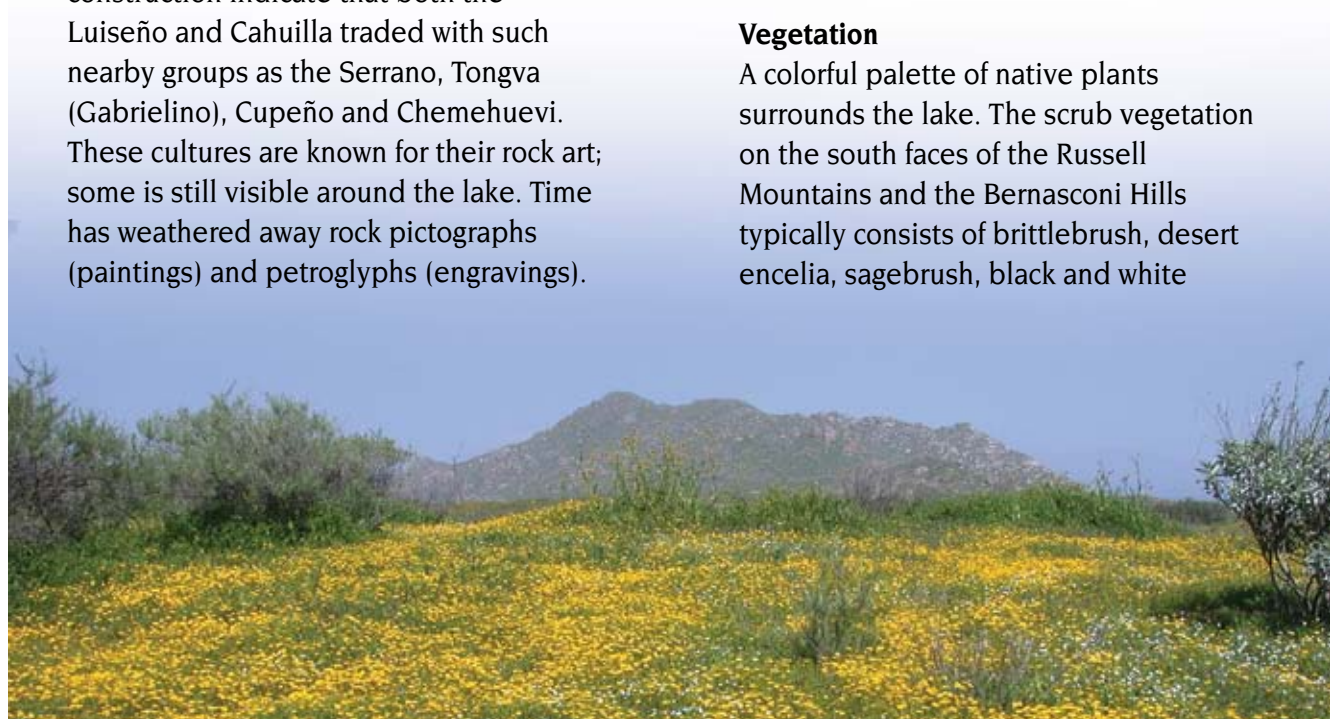
Native people's lives changed drastically with the arrival of Europeans. The native people had no immunity to new diseases; many lost their lives, especially those who had been resettled into crowded mission conditions. Today, community outreach and education help native descendants maintain their cultures through song, dance, crafts, ceremony and languages.

NATURAL HISTORY

Summers are hot and dry. The hottest months are from June through September, with an average high of 94 degrees in August. From December through April, rainfall averages about 10 inches; the average high temperature is 71 degrees, with a low of 46 degrees at night.

Vegetation

A colorful palette of native plants surrounds the lake. The scrub vegetation on the south faces of the Russell Mountains and the Bernasconi Hills typically consists of brittlebrush, desert encelia, sagebrush, black and white



sages, buckwheat and cactus species. The shadier northern or northwestern slopes are ideal for chamise and penstemon, interior live oak and sugar bush. Between November and April, these slopes are covered with colorful wildflowers, including goldfields, California poppies, phacelia and common fiddleneck. The valley grassland areas, visible in a few isolated locations, are only a remnant of once-abundant perennial grasses. Poison oak also grows in various locations—learn to recognize it and avoid it.

Wildlife

The coastal sage scrub and chaparral provide habitat for mule deer, bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, California quail, gopher snakes and rattlesnakes. Though generally shy, these animals can sometimes be spotted during daylight hours. Please do not feed any wild animals that you encounter.

Lake Perris is home to more than a hundred species of birds, many migratory. Some birds are here for short stopovers during their migrations, while others are permanent residents.

Birdwatchers may see roadrunners, loggerhead shrikes, larks, California thrashers, ospreys, bald eagles and several types of hawks and wrens.



Red-tailed
hawk

Waterfowl visitors include varied duck and goose species, whistling swans and pelicans. The water's edge attracts shorebirds such as avocets, willets, kingfishers, killdeer, black-necked stilts, egrets and herons.

The best time to observe these birds is in early morning and at dusk. Visit the park's website or check with staff about guided birding hikes or scheduled bird counts.

THE WATER PROJECT

In 1973 the newly opened Lake Perris State Recreation Area became the southernmost reservoir in the 701-mile California State Water Project. When 80 percent full, the lake's elevation is 1,560 feet above sea level, covering 1,800 surface acres. Located between the cities of Moreno Valley and Perris, the reservoir's storage capacity has helped nearby desert communities grow.

RECREATION

For updated hours, lake status, events, and all recreation and reservation information, visit www.parks.ca.gov/lakeperris or call (951) 940-5600 on weekdays. For boat entry reservations and site-specific camping reservations and information, visit the park website or call (800) 444-7275.

Fishing—Lake Perris is known for excellent largemouth bass fishing. The lake also has catfish, crappie, carp, and trophy-sized bluegill and redear sunfish. Rainbow trout are stocked fall through spring. For more information, see the Department of Fish and Game website at www.dfg.ca.gov.

All anglers aged 16 and over must carry a valid California fishing license, available



from sporting goods stores and the Lake Perris Marina Store at (951) 657-2179. The store rents boats and personal watercraft; it also carries tackle and groceries.

Camping—The family campground has tent camping sites without hookups. Electricity and sink water hookups are available in the paved RV sites. Family campsites accommodate up to eight people, with a maximum of three licensed vehicles. No extra-vehicle parking is available. Restrooms are nearby, and a trailer sanitation station is near the campground entrance.

Horse Camping—Seven primitive horse campsites—separate from the family campsites—have corrals, water troughs and chemical toilets. Each site accommodates up to eight people and two horses.

Picnicking—Lake Perris has nearly 300 picnic sites—many shaded—in various day-use areas throughout the park. Tables and grills are available. The most popular sites are located near Moreno Beach and Perris Beach.



Groups—For a fee, groups may reserve one of six group camps or three group picnic sites; larger groups may combine more than one group site.

Swimming—At full lake level, the two designated swimming areas are at Moreno Beach and Perris Beach. Use caution and swim at your own risk. Scuba diving is permitted at the west end of Perris Beach. Changing rooms, showers and restrooms are located along Perris Beach.

Boating—Lake Perris can accommodate more than 200 vessels on the water. Reservations are available in summer, when boat capacity may be reached early in the day.

Alessandro Island—For day-use only, boaters may enjoy the island's picnic tables, shade ramadas, grills and restrooms.

Hiking, Bicycling and Horseback Riding—The park's nine-mile equestrian, hiking and bicycling trail circles the lake. Another hiking trail ascends to the top of Terri Peak.

Ya'i Hek'i Regional Indian Museum—The name of the museum is Cahuilla for "Home of the Wind." The museum interprets the

history and cultural aspects of the native groups who call this region home. Hours are limited; see the park's website for current hours. Reservations are required for school group tours.

Rock Climbing—Big Rock is open year round. It provides climbing opportunities for beginning and intermediate climbers, with challenges for advanced climbers. Bring plenty of drinking water. **Climb at your own risk**—California State Parks does not install nor maintain the fixtures or equipment at Big Rock.

Geocaching—Lake Perris has a number of themed geocaches hidden in the park.

Lakeview Pavilion—Lake Perris has a multipurpose banquet/special event room that holds up to 130 guests. The indoor pavilion features a full kitchen and AV system, with an adjoining shaded patio and lawn overlooking the lake. The pavilion venue holds events such as weddings, parties or meetings.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Scattered throughout the park are accessible facilities for camping, picnicking, fishing, hiking, biking, horseback mounting, exhibits, programs and restrooms. Beach wheelchairs may be borrowed from the campground kiosk.

Visitors reserving accessible campsites must have Disabled Person or Disabled Veteran vehicle license plates or placards with written proof of eligibility.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Chino Hills State Park
North of Corona via Butterfield Rd.
off Hwy. 71 (951) 780-6222
- California Citrus State Historic Park
9400 Dufferin Ave., Riverside 92504
(951) 780-6222
- Mount San Jacinto State Park
Via Hwy. 243 from Idyllwild or by tram
from Palm Springs (951) 659-2107

QUAGGA MUSSELS

All vessels coming into the park will be inspected for quagga mussels, an invasive aquatic species that is microscopic in its larval stage. If introduced into a reservoir, they can destroy the food chain and ruin recreational opportunities and infrastructure. To protect our aquatic ecosystem, disinfect and dry your boat after each use.

To pass the free inspection and help prevent the spread of these mussels, please make sure your vessel is clean, the bilge and all engine vessel compartments are drained and dry, and the entire vessel is free of any water. For questions about the inspection process or requirements, visit <http://www.resources.ca.gov/quagga/>



Quagga mussels at various growth stages

